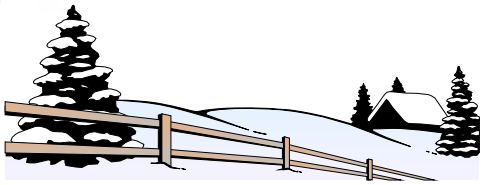
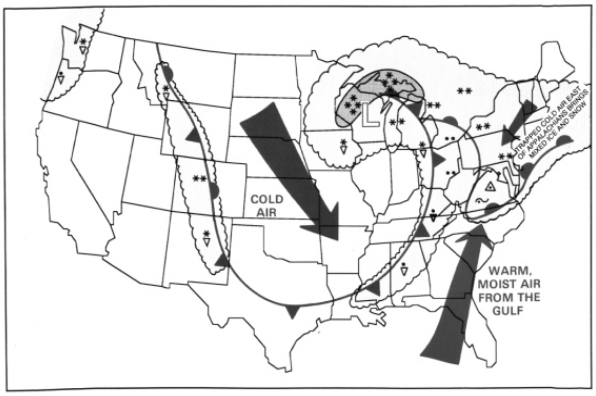
Winter Storms in Wisconsin





What Makes a Winter Storm?

Cold air: Below freezing temperatures in the clouds and near the ground are necessary to make snow and ice.

Moisture: Needed to form clouds and precipitation.

Lift: Something to raise the moist air to form clouds and precipitation, such as a front.

Where Do Winter Storms Develop?

- ❄ Storms that affect Wisconsin develop over southeast Colorado, northwest Canada, and over the southern Plains. These storms move toward the Midwest and use both the southward plunge of cold air from Canada and the northward flow of moisture from the Gulf of Mexico to produce heavy snow over the region.
- ❄ "Alberta Clippers," which develop in the lee of the Canadian Rockies and move southeast toward Wisconsin, not only bring accumulating snow, but also strong winds and extremely cold air to the state.
- ❄ Lake effect snowstorms develop as cold air moves across the relatively warmer waters of Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. Moisture from the lakes is then deposited as heavy snow within several miles of the shore.

Significant Past Winter Storms in Wisconsin

	DATE	LOCATION	CHARACTER	REMARKS
1	MAR 2-4, 1881	SRN & CNTRL WI	BLIZZARD	2' - 4' SNOWFALL, 20 FOOT DRIFTS
2	JAN 15, 1887	SRN & CNTRL WI	SNOWSTORM	2' SNOW, HUGE DRIFTS
3	DEC 27-28, 1904	SRN & CNTRL WI	HVY SNOW/ICE	26" NEILLSVILLE - 24 HOUR STATE RECORD
4	FEB 3-6, 1924	SRN WI	BLIZZARD	20.3" AT MILWAUKEE, 10' DRIFTS
5	NOV 11-12, 1940	STATEWIDE	BLIZZARD	12 DEATHS, SEVERE DRIFTING
6	NOV 6-8, 1943	STATEWIDE	HVY SNOW/ICE	10" - 18", ROADS BLOCKED FOR DAYS
7	JAN 28-30, 1947	SRN & CNTRL WI	BLIZZARD	10"-27" , 15' DRIFTS, BLOCKED ROADS
8	OCT 31 - NOV 2, 1991	NW & WC WI	SNOWSTORM	20"-31" SNOWFALL, HUGE DRIFTS
9	JAN 2-3, 1999	SRN & CNTRL WI	BLZD/SNOWSTORM	10-21" ACCUMS, 50-60 MPH GUSTS, 8' DRIFTS
10	MAR 13-14, 1997	WC TO NE WI	SNOWSTORM	12"-28" SNOWFALL OVER TWO DAYS